

Message Text

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EXDIS

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SUBJ: JORDAN AND THE MIDEAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

SUMMARY:

1. THIS TELEGRAM SUMMARIZED EMBASSY'S ANALYSIS (FORWARDED UNDER AIRGRAM) OF CURRENT JORDANIAN POSITION REGARDING MIDEAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND FORCES INFLUENCING JORDANIAN ATTITUDES.

2. GOJ IMPATIENTLY AWAITS COMING SYRIAN/ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT ROUND, HOPING NEGOTIATIONS WILL THEN TURN TO JORDAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT. RECENT INTER-ARAB CONSULTATIONS MERELY PAPERED OVER JORDAN-PLO COMPETITION AND DEVELOPED NO NEW STRATEGY ON WEST BANK AND JERUSALEM. KING HUSSEIN HAS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY RETRACTED THREAT TO ABANDON MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS TO PLO. TACTICALLY, THIS PLOY WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE ISRAEL, US, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA APPRECIATE THAT CONTINUING JORDANIAN ROLE IN DIFFICULT MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS IS IN THEIR INTEREST, CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED AND REQUIRES THEIR
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POSITIVE SUPPORT.

3. THERE WAS ADDITIONAL FACTOR IN THREAT TO ABANDON NEGOTIATIONS DERIVING FROM JORDANIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS. THERE REMAINS CONSIDERABLE GENUINE INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO ACTIVE JORDANIAN MIDEAST NEGOTIATING ROLE FROM POLITICALLY UNCOORDINATED GROUP COMPOSED OF EAST BANK ESTABLISHMENT AND SOME ARMY ELEMENTS, IN ADDITION TO ANTI-HASHEMITE PALESTINIANS. SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING MIDEAST NEGOTIATING ROLE CONSIST OF: (A) KING HUSSEIN'S SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO TRADITIONAL HASHEMITE ROLE IN PALESTINE AND JERUSALEM, (B) KING'S MAJOR ADVISORS, PLUS ESTABLISHMENT INTELLIGENSIA: AND (C) US POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON KING. ABILITY OF KING TO PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS DEPENDENT ALSO ON JORDANIAN INTERNAL SITUATION. AT THIS POINT HE NEEDS SOME MOVEMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS TO MAINTAIN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING JORDANIAN INVOLVEMENT. MEANWHILE, JORDAN PURSUES PASSIVE POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM IN WEST BANK AND NONE IN GAZA.

4. ON PROCEDURAL SIDE OF NEGOTIATIONS, RECENT HUSSEIN-SADAT MEETING PRODUCED JORDANIAN RECOGNITION OF SEPARATE PALESTINIAN DEL IN GENEVA (SUBJECT, OF COURSE, TO ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE) AND SADAT NON-OBJECTION (AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING) TO JORDANIAN PURSUIT OF JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT. JORDAN WANTS TO ACTIVATE WEST BANK DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL UNDER RES 242, THUS STEALING MARCH ON PLO. AT SAME TIME, JORDAN WANTS PLO AT GENEVA TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT. JORDAN HAS INTERPRETED HUSSEIN-SADAT UNDERSTANDING ON PLO ATTENDANCE AT GENEVA AS MEANING JORDAN WILL NEGOTIATE FOR WEST BANK WHILE RESOLVING DIFFICULT ISSUES OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS WOULD BE LEFT TO PLO. HOWEVER, KING HAS REPEATEDLY VOWED TO PERMIT INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED PLEBISCITE ON WEST BANK FOLLOWING ITS RECOVERY, AT WHICH POINT PALESTINIANS CAN DECIDE TO SEPARATE FROM, UNITE OR FEDERATE WITH JORDAN.

5. ON SUBSTANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS (TREATED AT GREATER LENGTH IN AIRGRAM), JORDAN APPEARS FLEXIBLE ON FINAL ON-THE-GROUND ARRANGEMENTS ON BOTH WEST BANK AND JERUSALEM AS WELL AS ON QUESTION OF DEMILITARIZATION. MAJOR RIGIDITIES APPEAR TO BE INSISTENCE ON ARAB SOVEREIGNTY OR CONTROL IN EAST JERUSALEM

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AND ON ISRAELI ABANDONMENT OF ALLON PLAN SECURITY INSTALLATIONS IN JORDAN VALLEY. ULTIMATE JORDANIAN POSITION ON ALL ISSUES IS, HOWEVER, DEPENDENT ON KING'S PERCEPTION OF RISKS TO SECURITY OF HASHEMITE REGIME, ON MAINTENANCE STABLE INTERNAL SITUATION AGAINST THOSE FORCES OPPOSING JORDANIAN NEGOTIATIONS AND TO RETAINING EXTERNAL POLITICAL BACKING FROM US AND AT LEAST SOME MODUS VIVENDI WITH MODERATE ARABS. PARTICULARLY EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA, AND PROBABLY SYRIA.

6. WE SEE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS AS PERTINENT TO IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATING SITUATION:

A. DESPITE ISRAELI NON-RESPONSIVENESS, KING HUSSEIN'S NEGOTIATING POSITION IS MORE COMFORTABLE THAN IT WAS TWO MONTHS AGO. HOWEVER, THIS SITUATION OBTAINS MAINLY BECAUSE OF GREATER FOCUS ON AND SLOWER PACE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA WHICH HAS DISPELLED SENSE OF URGENCY, PRESENT IN JORDAN TWO MONTHS AGO. THIS APPLIES PARTICULARLY TO THE JORDAN-PLO CONTEST FOR THE WEST BANK. ONCE THE SYRIAN HURDLE IS PAST, WE CAN NATURALLY EXPECT MORE ACTIVITY IN THE AREAS CLOSEST TO JORDAN--THE PLO, JERUSALEM AND THE WEST BANK.

B. GIVEN THE ABSENCE OF A THREATENED MIL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL, IT IS PROBLEMATIC WHETHER JORDAN ALONE CAN FORCE SEPARATE NEGOTIATION OF JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT IF SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT IS OBTAINED. THERE MAY BE STRONG PRESSURES FROM THE SOVIETS, THE PALESTINIANS AND RADICAL ARAB STATES TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS TO GENEVA, POSSIBLY PRE-EMPTING SEPARATE ACTIVITY ON JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT.

C. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT PREDICT DISASTER IF JORDAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS DO NOT OCCUR SOON, SOME EARLY MOVE ON THAT FRONT WOULD CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHEN KING HUSSEIN'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POSITION, PARTICULARLY IF PROGRESS IS MADE TOWARD A SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT.

D. WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO FORESEE THE FEASIBILITY OF PURSUING JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT IN THE EVENT THE ISRAELI-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS STALL. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE POSITION NOT ONLY OF THE U.S., BUT ALSO OF EGYPT
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AND SAUDI ARABIA IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES.

E. KING HUSSEIN REMAINS HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON U.S. SUPPORT IN BOTH SHORT AND LONG TERM IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN JORDAN'S ROLE IN THE MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS AGAINST BOTH EXTERNAL ARAB PRESSURES IN FAVOR OF THE PLO AND DOMESTIC JORDANIAN PRESSURES IN FAVOR OF ISOLATION.

7. FULLER ANALYSIS IN AIRGRAM POUCHED TO ADDRESSEES.
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